

# 1998 Session Report

2nd Legislative District

Representative

■ **Roger Bush**



**Committees:**

Children and Family Services

— *vice chair*

Government Reform

and Land Use

Energy and Utilities

**Contact me:**

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(360) 786-7824



Dear Second District Neighbor:

I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the 1998 legislative session. Having spoken with so many of you, I am satisfied that the things we did – and didn't do – were right on target with your wishes. We developed a \$2.4 billion funding package for our state's transportation needs, we successfully stopped a proposed gas tax increase, we provided the programs and funding needed to improve our education system, and we did all this while still holding the line on spending.

I take great personal satisfaction in two particular accomplishments of this session. The Transportation Department's Pacific Avenue "improvement" project dispute was settled in a way that assures better state cooperation with area citizens and business owners. We also have put into place the beginning of a model program to control the spread of "spam" or junk e-mail on the internet.

I believe that we met the critical needs of our state well and took care of many problems that have made life unnecessarily difficult for our citizens.

In coming months, I will be listening to more of you and getting your ideas. In this newsletter you will find details on upcoming town hall meetings where I will be available to answer your questions. If you have issues or concerns you'd like me to address, don't hesitate to get in touch with me by mail or by phoning (360) 786-7824 in Olympia.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature of Roger Bush in dark ink.

**Roger Bush**

State Representative

**Toll-free hotline: 1-800-562-6000**

### Funding public education

The 1997-98 state budget provides \$8.9 billion for K-12 public schools — an increase of \$570 million or nearly 7 percent, while inflation and student enrollment during the same period both increased about 3.9.

We fully funded basic education in our local school districts. The allocation of money to each district is based upon ratios of 18 students per class in grades K-3 and 22 students per class in grades 4-12. Modifications of class sizes in schools are made at the discretion of each local district.

We added \$362 million in education policy improvements, including:

- Salary and benefit increases for both certificated and classified staff.
- Reading improvement initiatives; teacher training in reading strategies and other academic areas.
- Funds to each teacher for additional classroom instructional materials.
- School technology.
- Levy equalization.
- School construction.



*Rep. Bush, a teacher in private life, enjoying one of his legislative “benefits” — showing children the Capitol Building.*

### We also passed legislation to:

**Improve safety: HB 1581 and HB 1841** give educators the tools and authority to maintain greater discipline in the classroom and improve our children’s safety at school.

**Reduce bureaucracy: HB 1303** frees local schools from unnecessary and excessive government regulations and red tape that hamper efforts to improve education. **HB 1865**, gives schools more options and alternatives in providing effective, efficient educational services.

**Build more schools:** Our budget plan completely fulfills the state’s current obligation to provide matching funds for school construction projects around the state.

### Funding transportation needs

The transportation improvement plan adopted by the House and Senate (ESSB 5456) provides \$195 million in supplemental funds to add to the transportation spending plan approved last year. Of that \$195 million, about \$48 million is contingent on Referendum 49, which will be on the ballot in November. It is the funding package passed by the Legislature to pay for \$2.4 billion of transportation needs across Washington state in the next six years. Most funding would come from a transfer of motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) revenue from the general fund to the transportation budget. Surplus general fund revenues would compensate for the transfer.

Projects in the 2nd District earmarked for new transportation spending include: \$1.75 million for continuing safety improvements already begun along Meridian Avenue from 176th Street to 204th Street and \$4.6 million to fund improvements being made in the Graham area on Meridian from 204th Street E. to 234th Street E. Also in the spending proposal is \$2.5 million for a high-

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occupancy-vehicle (HOV) feasibility study of the Interstate 5 corridor from the Dupont interchange north to the King County line.

## State Route 7 widening project

The state Department of Transportation's (DOT) plan to widen and "improve" a five-mile stretch of Pacific Avenue left a lot to be desired. The project would have eliminated up to 75 percent of the existing driveways along this established commercial strip, creating economic hardships for businesses and a traffic nightmare. After meeting with and listening to many area residents and business people, I developed legislation to resolve the issue.

After working for this legislative solution, however, we were given the protections we were seeking through an agreement with DOT. Secretary Sid Morrison of DOT says his department learned a lesson from this "pilot" project and will approach future access management projects very differently, particularly with regard to notifying and working with area businesses and property owners. It gave me great satisfaction to have Pacific Avenue business owners invited to assist DOT in re-writing the procedures for conducting such projects. I have been assured by the chair of the House Transportation Policy and Budget Committee that monitoring of the SR 7 project will continue and my help will be called upon as this project is carried out.

My heartfelt thanks to the members of the Access and Safety Association, particularly Scott Vanderflute and Mead McDonald, for the great job they did coordinating and keeping alive the fight to win common-sense concessions from DOT. **I will be keeping a close watch to see that both safety and access concerns are being met on Pacific Avenue.**



## Funding human needs

Helping seniors on fixed incomes and people with disabilities has been a priority of this Legislature. We expanded property tax exemptions for seniors and the disabled (**Senate Bill 6533**).

- If income is \$24,001 to \$30,000, all excess levies are exempted.
- If income is \$18,001 to \$24,000, all excess levies and regular levies on the greater of \$40,000 or 35 percent of assessed valuation (\$60,000 maximum) are exempted.
- If income is \$18,000 or less, all excess levies and regular levies on the greater of \$50,000 or 60 percent of assessed valuation are exempted.

Another measure (**House Bill 2503**) allows income levels to be considered when counties assess fees for storm water control. This could save individual homeowners up to \$125 a year.

To improve benefits for retired state teachers and workers, we approved a "gain-sharing" option for members of the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) I and the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) I plans (**HB 2491**).

We also expanded the **Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program** (ECEAP) for low-income children.

To increase the safety of our communities, we substantially **increased local criminal justice funding**.

## Cracking down on internet junk mail

The governor signed my bill, HB 2752, to stem the flow of junk e-mail, or "spam," coming into our homes through computers hooked up to the internet. It bans the sending of commercial e-mail messages from a computer in Washington or to anyone in Washington which contains untrue or misleading information. Fines range from \$500 to \$1,000 or actual damages, if greater, for each

offense. A plaintiff in a civil suit against a sender could also recover costs of the suit, up to \$10,000.

An internet service provider (ISP) will have authority to block receipt or transmission of e-mail which it reasonably believes is in violation of the new law.

My bill also creates a select task force on commercial e-mail to study technical, legal and cost issues related to the spam problem. During the interim months, the task force members and I will be putting in many hours assessing existing laws governing junk e-mail and reviewing similar efforts by the federal government and other states.

## Easing impact of emissions controls on motorists

The Legislature approved legislation requiring the Department of Ecology to review plans to create or expand vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance programs, with a new focus on lessening the effect of the program on motorists. Complaints to my office about emissions control testing in the 2nd District indicate this measure was long overdue.

***If you have any complaints regarding emissions testing or any state program or agency, please write or call my Olympia office for assistance.***

### You're invited to attend our 2nd District town hall meetings!

State Rep. Scott Smith and I will be holding town hall meetings for our constituents in the 2nd District on May 9, 1998.

#### Tacoma

10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Spana-Park Senior Center  
325 152nd E.

#### Graham

12:30 - 2 p.m.

Graham Library  
9202 224th St. E.

#### Orting

2:30 - 4 p.m.

Orting Multi-Purpose Center  
202 Washington Ave. S.

To let us know you plan to attend, or if you'd like more information, please call my office at (360) 786-7824 or the hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

**I look forward to seeing you!**